

### RESEARCH TO REALITY: DEVELOPING CREATIVE POINTS OF ENTRY WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Claudia Chouinard, Results Group International, NYC,  
Ellen Rosewall, University of Wisconsin,  
Carlo Cuesta, Creation In Common, Saint Paul  
Andrew Goldberg, Florida Grand Opera, Miami

Link to new audiences (the persuadables, the maybes, the inclined) through creative points of entry by developing community partners who are already in touch with those we want to reach.

When we go prospecting for these new “persuadable” customers we must provide them with creative entry points. How do we get them to step over the threshold? By removing barriers and providing inducements such as ticket deals (for the price sensitive), high customer service and opportunities for a social experience.

Today’s tight budgets force us to look to the short term payoffs, but marketing should have a longer term perspective. You want to build a long term relationship with your audiences.

As adults it often is difficult for us to learn new things. It can feel humiliating for first time attendees. Figure out what you can do to help them? If you are looking to entice people who don’t normally attend your events, don’t focus on getting your message onto the arts pages in the newspaper. You want to be in the food section! Example: the Royal Shakespeare Company organized a meal available at intermission that featured British food. Or the Sports section. A visiting orchestra had a baseball team and challenged the hometown orchestra to a game. These promotional events were covered in the food and sports section, as well as the arts section.

### 3 CASE STUDIES FOR FLORIDA GRAND OPERA:

1. They went to the Florida Marlins and offered their opera singers to sing the national anthem. They asked the Marlins to play their PSA on the jumbotron. The opera’s general manager through the opening pitch for one game. Results are not measurable, but they did create awareness of opera as being at least conversant with folks who like baseball.

2. To bring in a younger audience they reviewed their promotional materials and saw that they appealed mostly to the patrons they already had. So they decided to change the message and look. They did a photo shoot with three young female leads who were, frankly, “three babes.” These photos went on bus shelters, brochures and ads. It sent the message that people who look like you (young) come to the opera. Young people came and ticket sales increased 11%.

3. American Express supported a drawing for a giveaway of 1,000 pairs of tickets for Madama Butterfly. Ads went onto bus shelters, a billboard, onto Papa John’s pizza boxes. Also promoted by Florida Marlins and Starbucks. 1700 people entered.

The maybes will come if they can find a point of entry. How do we attract them? By providing multiple points – sports, literary events, film, food, other leisure activities –

and publicizing these points widely. Use community partners to reach the uninitiated: stores, civic groups, churches, schools, libraries, businesses.

Emotional appeals can turn maybes into yes’s. But you cannot talk in code (jargon). Demystify your venue and your event.

Finally, the context of your entry point must connect with your mission. Review your mission. If you are a museum that emphasizes alternative arts, it makes sense to reach out to a younger demographic and design entry point events for them. In Fargo N. Dakota the Plains Arts Museum did a focus group of 18-24 year olds and formed a team representing this demographic to do outreach to this age group. They created raves in the museum gallery that attracted this younger segment. This approach probably would not make sense for a museum focusing on Early American or Classical European art.